

Appl. No. 10/602,148
Amdt. Dated October 27, 2004
Reply to Office Action of August 23, 2004

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the non-final Office action mailed August 23, 2004. Reexamination and reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks is respectfully solicited.

Claims 1-53 are now pending in this application, with Claims 1, 14, 26, 43, 51, 52, and 53 being the independent claims. Claims 1, 2, 14, 15, 20, 26, 27 and 43 have been cosmetically amended, and Claims 51-53 are newly presented herein. No new matter is believed to have been added.

Before proceeding with the merits of the Office action, Applicant would like to gratefully acknowledge Examiner Le's indication that the subject matter of Claims 2, 3, 5, 8-13, 15, 16, 18, 20-25, 27-30, and 33-50 is allowable. As such, those features recited in originally-filed Claims 2, 15, and 27 have been incorporated into independent Claims 1, 14, and 26, respectively. Moreover, newly presented independent Claims 51-53 include the subject matter of independent Claims 1, 14, and 26 with additional subject matter indicated as being allowable.

Claim Objections

Claim 43 was objected to due to some minor informalities. In response, Applicant has amended independent Claim 43 to correct the cited informalities. As such, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the claim objections.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 6, 7, 14, 19, and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Nos. 6,216,674 (Corkill) and 6,549,857 (Fierro et al.), Claims 4, 17, and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Corkill, Fierro et al., and U.S. Patent No. 5,363,695 (Jensen), and Claim 32 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Corkill, Fierro et al., and U.S. Patent No. 4,510,792 (Morel et al.).

While not conceding the propriety of these rejections, Applicant has amended independent Claims 1, 14, and 26 to include subject matter indicated as being allowable

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in the Office action. As such, the above-noted rejections are hereby mooted, and reconsideration and withdrawal of the same is respectfully solicited.

New Claims

As was noted above, new independent Claims 51-53 are directed to subject matter indicated as being allowable.

Conclusion

Based on the above, independent Claims 1, 14, 26, 43, 51, 52, and 53 are patentable over the citations of record. The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable for the reasons given above with respect to the independent claims and because each recite features which are patentable in its own right. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully solicited.

The other art of record is also not understood to disclose or suggest the inventive concept of the present invention as defined by the claims.

Hence, Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

If the Examiner has any comments or suggestions that could place this application in even better form, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the below-listed number.

If for some reason Applicant has not paid a sufficient fee for this response, please consider this as authorization to charge Ingrassia, Fisher & Lorenz, Deposit Account No. 50-2091 for any fee which may be due.

Respectfully submitted,

INGRASSIA FISHER & LORENZ

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